

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6938

UNCLAS HELSINKI 2910

FOR EUR/EX MRS. JOAN CLARK FROM AMBASSADOR KREHBIEL.

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AFSP, FL

SUBJ: LOCAL EMPLOYEE SALARY INCREASES.

1. ONCE AGAIN I TURN TO YOU FOR ASSISTANCE IN RESOLVING OUR MOST SERIOUS PROBLEM -- EQUITABLE COMPENSATION FOR OUR FINNISH PERSONNEL. IN MY LETTER TO YOU DATED OCT. 16, 1973, I SET FORTH IN CONSIDERABLE DETAIL THE REASONS THAT MAKE IMPERATIVE THE IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REVISED LOCAL WAGE SCALE SUBMITTED BY OM DATED SEPT. 25, 1973.

2. ON NOV. 14 WE RECEIVED THE DEPARTMENT'S 224014 GIVING A CRITIC OF OUR PRESENTATION AND REQUESTING ADDITIONAL INFORMATION. ON NOV. 16 WE REPLIED (HELSINKI 2898) ACCEPTING THE VALIDITY OF THE DEPARTMENT'S CRITICISM AND FURNISHING INFORMATION THAT FURTHER SUPPORTS OUR CASE FOR LOCAL WAGE INCREASES.

3. WHAT WE NEED MOST OF ALL AT THIS TIME IS A FULL, BASIC WAGE SURVEY CONDUCTED BY A PROFESSIONAL IN THIS FIELD. THE LAST REAL LOCAL WAGE SURVEY HERE WAS CONDUCTED IN 1966 AND A COPY OF THAT IS NOT AVAILABLE. IN SHORT, WE ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE APPROACH TAKEN BY THIS EMBASSY IN RECENT YEARS HAS BEEN LESS THAN PROFESSIONAL. THIS DEFICIENCY IS MAINLY DUE TO THE FACT THAT WE HAVE HAD NEITHER A PERSONNEL OFFICER NOR A PERSONNEL ASSISTANT. THE REPORT WE SUBMITTED BY OM ON SEPTEMBER 25, 1973, UNCLASSIFIED

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WAS PREPARED BY OUR ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER, ROYAL

CARTER, OVER A PERIOD WHEN HE WAS PREOCCUPIED BY THE CSCE AND THE FS INSPECTORS' VISIT. HE WILL BE FIRST TO ADMIT THAT OUR SUBMISSION WAS NOT THE CLASSIC, TRADITIONAL DOCUMENT, BUT I CAN ATTEST TO THE FACT THAT IT REFLECTED A TRULY HONEST ACCOUNT OF THE SITUATION HERE. THE FACT THAT OUR LOCAL EMPLOYEES ARE LAGGING OVER 20 PERCENT BEHIND THEIR COUNTERPARTS IN COMPARABLE POSITIONS ON THE FINNISH ECONOMY IS SERIOUS ENOUGH. WHEN THE US EMPLOYEES CONTINUE TO GET REGULAR AND TIMELY ACROSS-THE-BOARD RAISES, THE SITUATION VIS-A-VIS THE LOCAL EMPLOYEES BECOMES THAT MORE CRITICAL.

4. I AM NOT ONE TO "CRY WOLF" OR GIVE ULTIMATA. HOWEVER, I HONESTLY WOULD NOT BLAME SEVERAL OF OUR KEY SENIOR LOCAL EMPLOYEES IF THEY DECIDED TO LEAVE THE EMBASSY BY THE END OF THE YEAR SHOULD THEY NOT RECEIVE A SIZEABLE PAY INCREASE AND THIS THEY HAVE THREATENED TO DO. THE LABOR MARKET HERE WOULD QUICKLY GRAB THEM UP. UNDER THE PRESENT WAGE SCALE, WE WOULD BE FORTUNATE IF THEIR REPLACEMENTS WERE EVEN SEMI-SKILLED. TO ILLUSTRATE THAT DOOMSDAY IS IN FACT TO SOME EXTENT ALREADY UPON US, USIS HAS SINCE JUNE LOST BY RESIGNATION THREE EMPLOYEES EACH OF WHOM GAVE AS HIS REASON FOR RESIGNING THE FACT THAT HE COULD MAKE A CONSIDERABLY HIGHER WAGE ELSEWHERE. THE FIRST TO GO, THE TOP INFORMATION ASSISTANT, RESIGNED TO BECOME HEAD OF PUBLIC RELATIONS FOR THE TELEPHONE COMPANY OF HELSINKI. IN ADDITION, THE EMBASSY'S TOP LOCAL IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION (18 YEARS) RESIGNED IN AUGUST FOR THE SAME REASON.

5. I KNOW WE HAVE AN HONEST CASE FOR A 20 PERCENT RAISE. AS AN INTERIM MEASURE, I THINK I CAN ASSUAGE THE LOCAL STAFF IF AN ACROSS-THE-BOARD 15 PERCENT RAISE WERE GRANTED. AT THE SAME TIME I WOULD APPRECIATE HAVING SENT HERE ON A TDY BASIS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OR FROM ONE OF THE LARGE EMBASSIES IN EUROPE A QUALIFIED PERSONNEL OFFICER TO CONDUCT A PROPER FULL WAGE SURVEY. UNTIL THAT IS DONE OUR LOCAL EMPLOYEES ARE NOT GOING TO RECEIVE EQUITABLE COMPENSATION.

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6. I WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR DISCUSSING THIS SUBJECT WITH ROYAL CARTER (CURRENTLY SITTING ON THE INTERMEDIATE EVALUATION BOARDS) AND HOPEFULLY IMPROVING THE PROPOSED INTERIM AND LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS TO THIS MOST SERIOUS PROBLEM.

KREHBIEL

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